

2008 Pulaski Award Winner

Agency Fire Directors at the National Interagency Fire Center chose the Nevada Interagency Operations Committee (NIOC) as the recipient of the 2008 Pulaski Award. The NIOC has earned this recognition for its exceptional work in developing partnerships oriented to interagency cooperation, coordination and standardization in fire management in the state of Nevada.

The Pulaski is a half-axe/half-hoe tool uniquely designed for wildland firefighting. This tool is named after a forest ranger who led a crew through thick smoke, heat and flames to the safety of a railroad tunnel during the Montana/Idaho inferno of 1910.

The award is an annual event which recognizes groups from a federal, state, tribal, local government, or cooperating organizations that have demonstrated outstanding performance in the areas of interagency cooperation, coordination, and standardization, safety of wildland firefighters and the public during a wildfire, outstanding group performance in fire management and suppression activities, outstanding performance on a wildland fire management project or activity, and development of partnerships or communications tools.

The NIOC and its partners have done an excellent job in addressing the problems and issues inherent with large and complex wildland fire programs. Specifically, this group focuses on statewide operations issues and provides a direct link between on the ground issues and the interagency Fire Management Officers in the state of Nevada. The committee recognized several years ago that many fires in Nevada that escaped initial attack efforts were continuing to be managed by initial attack forces due to a lack of Incident Management Teams (IMTs) at all levels. On the other end of the spectrum, it was realized that in a lot of instances, incidents were managed by an IMT that was over qualified for the complexity of the incident. The committee set out to expand and improve the role of the Nevada Type III team operations. The team set a goal of finding additional personnel to participate in the Type III program. The group realized early that it would take a commitment by committee members partnering with Agency Administrators, Fire Management Officers and employees of the supporting agencies at the County, State and Federal level to be successful. The work of NIOC is now paying off with huge benefits with four effective Interagency Type III teams in Nevada. Nevada now has four regular Incident Commanders (ICs) and three to four approved alternate ICs to step in when needed.

The award was presented by John Glenn, Division Chief for BLM Fire Operations at the National Interagency Fire Center on behalf of the Fire Directors at the Nevada Interagency Operations Committee meeting on May 5, 2009 in Ely, Nevada.

